

# **Sacramento-Northeast Bay Area Joint Planning Project Smarter Growth Along the I-80/Capitol Corridor**

## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

Over the next two decades, growth pressures will increase significantly in both the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sacramento regions, specifically along the I-80/Capitol Corridor through Solano, Yolo, Sacramento and Placer counties. As the two regions try to manage this growth through a variety of incentives and planning efforts aimed at promoting more compact development patterns, they are doing so with only a minimal ability to exchange information, demographic data, and lessons learned.

The joint planning project proposed in this application will create a new interregional collaboration to provide a critical compilation of demographic projections and smart growth forecasts for the corridor. This information will be used to test the transportation and air quality impacts of smart growth plans and policies. Such comparative information will highlight critical public policy choices for transportation investments and land use decisions in the corridor and recommend changes to existing transportation and demographic models. A comprehensive assessment of the study, including the key policy implications, will be summarized in a final report that will be written for a statewide audience.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

Both the San Francisco Bay Area and the Sacramento regions have recently undertaken comprehensive smart growth planning efforts to promote more compact development patterns and reduce the burden on regional transportation infrastructure. Both regions are planning to house more of their own workers, thus producing an improved jobs-housing relationship, fewer vehicle miles traveled, and reduced commuting from outside each region. Both regions are also planning for significant investments in future highway and transit infrastructure, including carpools, vanpools, Amtrak's Capitol Corridor, new commuter rail service, the widening of I-80 and more. The overall goal of the project is to maximize the effectiveness of transportation investments along the I-80/Capitol Corridor by better understanding and planning for future demand for jobs and housing in a way that minimizes traffic congestion and air pollution, maximizes travel in alternatives to single occupant vehicles, and supports the smart growth principles adopted by both regions.

The purpose of this joint planning proposal is to: (1) compile the two region's demographic forecasts and smart growth scenarios to compare and contrast key assumptions related to housing, employment, and travel growth trends; (2) compare the joint interregional projections with both local general plans along the corridor and the predicted future market demand for infill development and transit-oriented housing; (3) evaluate the transportation investment and air quality impacts of the two region's smart growth scenarios for the corridor; and (4) use the

findings and analysis from the compiled interregional projections to define key policy implications for the corridor from both transportation and land use perspectives, and assisting in the upgrades of, or recommend changes for, statewide, regional and local models that cover the corridor.

The project will be guided by an interregional steering committee comprised of staff from the regional agencies, Caltrans, the air districts, and local governments along the corridor, along with representatives from economic, equity and environmental interests.

The project will focus on those areas along the I-80/Capitol Corridor, including Solano, Yolo, Sacramento and Placer counties. In addition, the project will have the added benefits of:

- Promoting a better understanding of transportation and air quality impacts of smart growth planning for a heavily traveled corridor;
- Building a stronger link between local plans, interregional forecasts and smart growth planning;
- Facilitating the implementation of both region's smart growth visions;
- Coordinating future transportation investments and corridor planning;
- Improving growth forecasts for both regions;
- Providing a model for interregional cooperation that could provide assist similar efforts statewide.

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Task 1: Finalize Workslope, Budget & Schedule**

The four project partners will work with Caltrans staff to finalize the project workslope, budget and schedule. In addition, the participants will be identified to serve on the interregional steering committee.

*Deliverable 1a: Revised workslope, budget & schedule*

### **Task 2: Upgrade Solano Transportation Authority Travel Model**

Solano County plays a critical role in the corridor and for this project in particular, yet the Solano Transportation Authority's travel model is currently lacks the capacity to analyze any public transportation trips or any other travel by alternative modes. This task will provide a critical upgrade to the county's travel model in order to incorporate alternative modes of transportation.

*Deliverable 2a: Revision to the transportation model used by the Solano Transportation Authority to better incorporate alternative modes of transportation.*

### **Task 3: Compile Interregional Demographic Forecasts and Smart Growth Scenarios**

A critical step in greater coordination is to identify and analyze potential inconsistencies in long-range population and employment forecasts between the two regions. Regional smart growth policies are a significant change to the modeling in each region and the implications to broader areas have not been examined. The new projections assume different patterns of development, investment, and amount of overall growth. Our proposed analysis will determine whether each region is appropriately forecasting future residential and job growth in the other region.

Currently the two regions do not formally try to coordinate their forecasts. With the implementation of smart growth policies, this coordination is becoming more important; Our study will also evaluate whether each region is using their neighbors' newly developed smart growth assumptions correctly.

The first proposed work product from this task will be a compilation and analysis of population and employment projections for Solano, Yolo, Sacramento, and Placer counties. This analysis will focus on each region's smart growth policy assumptions and the affect of those policy assumptions on issues like interregional commuting. Another component of this task will be a detailed examination of the impacts of implementing both regions' smart growth scenarios.

This task will also produce an interregional dialogue to coordinate assumptions and demographic and economic forecasts for the two regions. Technical meetings between staffs will be used to explain and resolve differing economic and demographic assumptions. Participants will work together to exchange data on economics, demographics, land use, and infrastructure, providing the foundation for continued coordination on these issues.

*Lead Agencies: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Association of Bay Area Governments*

*Deliverable 3a: Analysis of interregional projections for population and employment emphasizing the impacts of smart growth policies and interregional commuting.*

*Deliverable 3b: Strategy to coordinate future demographic and employment projections and improve modeling of the I-80 corridor.*

### **Task 4: Comparison of Interregional Forecasts with Local Plans and Future Housing and Employment Market Demands**

Once interregional projections have been analyzed, the next step will be to compare these forecasts with local land use plans and policies. This task will require the project staff to collect data from and consult with local government planning and economic development agencies. It will provide an important evaluation of existing development policies and any potential inconsistencies to each region's smart growth regional policies.

Data on land use potential and policies will be collected and coordinated between the two regions, and shared with local jurisdictions. Continued coordination will allow the regions to

evaluate the relative success of the their individual smart growth efforts, and make each region aware of future changes.

This task will also include the completion of a new housing and employment demand study for the corridor. The study will provide a new look at the type of housing products and jobs that will be in demand throughout the interregional I-80/Capitol Corridor in the coming decades, with a particular emphasis on the potential market demand for higher density, infill housing and jobs that would be better suited for more infill and transit-accessible locations.

The employment demand analysis will identify current goods movement-supportive businesses, assess how existing land use plans may impinge on the ability for these businesses to grow and estimate land needed to support future goods movement activities in the corridor.

A forward-looking analysis for future housing and employment demand can be a critical piece of assessing whether the market will exist in the future to support the growth patterns envisioned under the smart growth scenarios.

*Lead Agencies: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Association of Bay Area Governments.*

*Deliverable 4a: Analysis of local land use plans relative to compiled interregional projections.*

*Deliverable 4b: Analysis of housing and employment market demand for corridor relative to compiled interregional projections.*

*Deliverable 4c: Analysis of corridor goods movement-supportive businesses*

### **Task 5: Evaluation of Transportation and Air Quality Impacts of Interregional Projections and Smart Growth Forecasts for the Corridor**

This effort will make use of the interregional projections data along with the housing and employment market demand study in order to develop several corridor-wide land use scenarios. The land use scenarios will be developed by the interregional steering committee in close cooperation with local planning staff and local elected officials, and will be geared towards testing the efficacy of smart growth principles and both regions' smart growth visions. Various land use scenarios will be developed for the corridor, including three based on (a) the compiled interregional demographic projections; (b) the build out of local general plans; and (c) the two regions' forecasts for the corridor based on the Bay Area's Smart Growth Vision and SACOG's Blueprint project.

Each of the interregional land use scenarios will be analyzed for impacts on commuting times, vehicle miles traveled, and the impacts on goods movement, public transportation, carpooling, ridesharing and other alternative travel options that are currently being developed along the I-80/Capitol Corridor. Among the key questions to be answered through this analysis: which of

the scenarios most successfully reduces future traffic congestion and boosts all forms of public transit ridership along the corridor? Which of the scenarios maximizes carpools, vanpools and ridesharing? What impacts do the different scenarios have on goods movement in the corridor? Which of the scenarios produces the least impacts on air quality?

The data produced as a result of this effort will be shared through several roundtable dialogues. The first round will be with local government planning staff, followed by sessions with local elected officials.

*Lead Agencies: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the Solano Transportation Authority in partnership with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District, and the Sacramento Metro Air Quality Management District.*

*Deliverable 5a: Analysis of alternative land use scenarios for the I-80/Capitol Corridor in terms of the impact on both transportation and air quality and the implications for planned transportation investments along the corridor.*

*Deliverable 5b: Two roundtable meetings with planning staff and local electeds to discuss the findings from Tasks 3-5.*

## **Task 6: Lessons Learned: Implications for Interregional Policy and Planning Practices**

Once we have compiled the interregional forecasts, compared them to predicted market demand and local general plans, and analyzed alternative land use scenarios for the corridor, the next task is to assess the major public policy implications. The findings generated from Tasks 1 through 3 will be summarized and presented to the interregional steering committee for discussion. Among the key topics anticipated: (a) how to resolve inconsistencies between the two region's demographic forecasts; (b) how to resolve inconsistencies between the compilation of the interregional corridor-wide projections with both the predicted market demand and the potential growth allowable under the build out of local general plans; (c) how to apply the findings from the land use scenarios (Task 3) to the planned transportation investments in the corridor; d) how to accommodate expanded goods movement activities. An in-depth discussion of these topics will be a significant part of the final report (see below).

In addition to the assessment of transportation and land use choices for the corridor, we will work to harmonize the transportation and demographic models—used by SACOG, ABAG, MTC and the Solano Transportation Authority—with the Caltrans statewide travel model and the intercity rail model. We will recommend changes to these models to better account for new demographic projections, jobs-housing balance, and the ability of changes in land use patterns to shift the travel modes for local non-work trips.

*Lead Agencies: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Association of Bay Area Governments, Solano Transportation Authority*

*Deliverable 6a: Synthesis of lessons learned from tasks 3-5, with major public policy implications highlighted and recommendations proposed for resolving inconsistencies and conflicts among overall transportation, demographic and land use assumptions.*

*Deliverable 6b: Analysis of existing modeling capabilities within existing planning agencies and recommendations for harmonizing transportation models to better reflect compiled interregional projections.*

## **Task 7: Final Report & Recommendations**

This joint planning effort will culminate in a report geared towards the local jurisdictions, stakeholders, and regional and statewide planning agencies along the corridor, but written with a statewide audience in mind. The report will highlight new interregional employment and demographic projections. It will provide an in-depth analysis of the findings from tasks 1-3, and provide recommendations resulting from the dialogue around the transportation and land use policy implications and choices anticipated among the interregional steering committee members as part of task 4.

*Lead Agencies: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Association of Bay Area Governments, Solano Transportation Authority*

*Deliverable 7a: Final Report highlighting findings and geared towards stakeholders along the corridor as well as other regions where interregional planning has strong potential or Interregional Partnerships (IRPs) are already underway.*

## **MEETING GRANT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

This grant proposal is an excellent match to the grant specific objectives outlined under the Partnership Planning Element. The interregional effort to compile demographic forecasts and smart growth projections along the I-80 corridor in order to maximize the effectiveness of transportation investments will have multi-regional benefits and provide an important model statewide for other similar efforts. This joint planning project can result in significant transportation benefits in terms of easing the traffic burden on the I-80 corridor, shortening commute times through better jobs-housing balance, and providing more options to residents by maximizing the effectiveness of public transportation, including carpooling, express buses and Amtrak's Capitol Corridor.

This project will also greatly advance cooperation and coordination between the Bay Area and the Sacramento regions, between local governments and state and regional agencies along the corridor, and between public agencies and members of stakeholder groups, in particular representatives of economic, equity and environmental interests.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The joint planning project will be guided by an interregional steering committee, which will consist of staff representatives from Caltrans, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments, the Solano Transportation Authority, the three air districts with jurisdiction over the project study area, local government staff, and representatives from environmental groups, social equity interests and the business community. The steering committee will guide all components of the scope of work, including public involvement and outreach.

## **PROJECT OUTCOMES**

This joint planning project will produce a number of significant work products. These include:

- A new compilation of interregional demographic projections and smart growth visions for the I-80/Capitol Corridor;
- A new housing and employment market demand study for the corridor;
- A comparison of the interregional demographic projections with the growth predicted by the housing market demand study, and the growth that could be accommodated based on an analysis of local general plans;
- An analysis of alternative land use scenarios for the I-80/Capitol Corridor that identifies transportation (including goods movement) and air quality impacts;
- An assessment of how land use plans affect critical goods movement-supportive businesses in the corridor
- An analysis of public policy implications from the study findings and proposed recommendations for resolving inconsistencies and conflicts among overall transportation, demographic and land use assumptions.
- Recommendations for changes to transportation and demographic models used throughout the corridor, including assistance in the upgrade of the Solano County transportation model;
- A final report summarizing all of the above;

The interregional steering committee will be responsible for the oversight of this project and provide a more formal accountability structure for the project as a whole in order to ensure successful outcomes. The project will use its resources in an extremely cost-effective manner because it will utilize both technical and professional capacity at the various public agencies that

are already responsible for transportation planning and demographic forecasts along the corridor. Given that the I-80/Capitol Corridor is also an area of significant planned transportation investments, such as Interstate 80, the I-80/680 interchange, Amtrak's Capitol Corridor, express buses, ridesharing programs and more, this project can potentially pay for itself many times over by reducing the need for future infrastructure through taking advantage of smarter land use patterns and planned investments in transportation alternatives.